CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of distributing literature in the form of a booklet which includes a plurality of sheets of media, comprising:

counting the number of sheets of media in the booklet;

estimating the weight of each sheet of media; and,

multiplying the number of sheets of media in the booklet by the estimated weight of each sheet of media to calculate the total weight of the media.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the booklet includes binding materials to hold the sheets of media together, the method further comprising:

estimating the weight of the binding materials; and,

adding the weight of the binding materials and the total weight of the media.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the booklet includes a cover, the method further comprising:

estimating the weight of the cover; and,

adding the weight of the cover to the total weight of the media.

4. The method claim 1, further comprising automatically calculating postage for the booklet based on the total weight of the media.

5. The method of claim 2, further comprising automatically calculating postage for the booklet based on the total weight of the media together with the weight of the binding materials.

6. The method of claim 3, further comprising automatically calculating postage for the booklet based on the total weight of the media together with the weight of the cover.

7. A method of distributing literature in the form of a booklet comprised of a plurality of sheets of media collectively defining a weight, the method, comprising:

calculating the weight of the booklet by multiplying the number of sheets of media which are used in the booklet by the estimated weight of each sheet of media;

calculating a postage to be paid to a delivery service to deliver the booklet to an individual, wherein the postage is calculated based on the weight of booklet; and,

printing the postage on the booklet.

8. The method of claim 7, and further comprising:

receiving a client inquiry;

prompting the client for a name and address in response to the client inquiry;

receiving a name and address from the client in response to the prompt; etc.

sending a literature selection prompt signal to the client via the communication link in response to receiving the name and address data signal;

receiving a literature selection data signal from the client via the communication link in response to sending the selection prompt signal;

sending a finish command prompt signal to the client via the communication link in response to receiving the selection data signal;

receiving a command signal from the client via the communication link in response to sending the finish command prompt signal, and wherein the weight of the booklet is calculated in response to receiving the command signal.

9. The method of claim 8, and further comprising:

assembling selected literature in response to the receiving the finish command signal; and,

printing the selected literature onto sheets of media in response to assembling the selected literature.

10. The method of claim 9, and further comprising:

storing a name and address of a client in a memory in response to receiving the name and address data signal;

retrieving the name and address of the client from the memory in response to receiving the finish command signal; and,

printing the name and address of the client on a cover sheet of media in response to retrieving the name and address of the client from the memory.

11. The method of claim 7, and further comprising:

automatically generating a customized cover letter addressed to a client based on literature selected by the client and in response to receiving the finish command signal; and,

printing the cover letter on a sheet of media which is to be included in the booklet in response to generating the customized cover letter.

12. An apparatus for automatically distributing literature to a client, comprising:

a processor;

a database comprising literature;

a controller configured to control various operational aspects of the apparatus;

a booklet-producing device configured to produce a booklet which contains selected portions of the literature;

a communication link which is connectable between the controller and the booklet-producing device, and which is configured to provide signal communication there between; and,

wherein the processor is configured to receive a request for the selected portions of the literature, to retrieve the selected portions of the literature from the database, and to transmit the selected portions of the literature to the booklet producing device via the communication link.

13. The apparatus of claim 12, and further comprising a database which is resident within the controller and which is configured to contain all of the literature from which selected literature can be obtained for printing in the booklet, and wherein the processor is further configured to execute a series of computer executable steps to assemble selected portions of the literature from the database into a printable format to be printed by the booklet-producing device.

14. The apparatus of claim 12, and wherein the processor is configured to execute a series of computer executable steps to generate a cover letter addressed to the client, wherein the cover letter is based on portions of the literature selected by the client.

15. The apparatus of claim 12, and wherein:

the booklet comprises a plurality of sheets of media; and,

the processor is configured to execute a series of computer executable steps to count the number of sheet of media which are used in making a given booklet and to calculate the postage for the given booklet based on the number of sheets of media counted for the given booklet, and on an estimated weight of each sheet of media.

16. The apparatus of claim 12, and wherein the processor is configured to execute a series of computer executable steps to generate prompt signals to send to the client.

17. The apparatus of claim 12, and wherein the processor is configured to execute a series of computer executable steps to receive and direct signals from the client via a communication link.

18. The apparatus of claim 12, and further comprising a client interface device in signal communication with the controller.